

REMARKS

This response is provided to the Office Action of **June 29th, 2004**. In the Action, claims 1-3, 5, 7, 8, 10-15, 17, 23, 25, 27 and 20-31 were rejected; claims 4, 6, 9, 16, 18, 24, 26 and 28 were merely objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims; and claims 19-22 were deemed allowable. In addition, the Examiner identified a number of lingering informalities in the drawings and the specification.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the identification of patentable subject matter.

With this response, Applicant has amended the title, the drawings and the specification of the application as provided above. In addition, Applicant has amended claims 1-3, 6-8, 17, 18, 23 and 26 were amended, as above; claims 4, 9, 24 and 31 were cancelled without prejudice; and new claims 32 and 33 were introduced. Support for the amendments can be found in the original specification, figures and/or claims and, in this regard, no new matter has been introduced. Upon entry of this response, claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-23, and 25-30, 32 and 33 as selectively amended are pending. Favorable consideration of the pending application is respectfully requested.

In the Title

With this response, Applicant has amended the title, as above. Applicant notes that the proposed title is consistent with the independent claims of the pending application.

Objection to the Drawings

In paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Action, the Examiner correctly identifies a number of lingering informalities in the Drawings. Applicant regrets the oversight leading to such informalities. With this response, Applicant has amended the specification, as above, as well as

Figs. 1 and 9. For the convenience of the Examiner, the drawing amendments are denoted (in red ink) in a marked-up version of Figs. 1 and 9; and substitute drawing sheets reflecting the proposed amendments are also provided. With this response, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 1-3, 5, 7-8, 10-15, 17, 23, 25, 27, 29-31

In paragraph 3 of the Action, claims 1-3, 5, 7-8, 10-15, 17, 23, 25, 27 and 29-31 were rejected as being anticipated [sic.] over a patent issued to Raleigh, et al. (USP 6,144,711) in view of a patent issued to Eidson (USP 6,411,824) pursuant to 35 USC §103(a).

Without adopting the characterization of the references, the appropriateness of the rejection, or the appropriateness of the combination of the cited documents as proposed in the Action, in an effort to conclude prosecution of this matter Applicant has amended the claims, as above, to overcome the rejection thereof. Applicant expressly reserves the right to resubmit such claims, as originally filed, in a continuation and/or divisional to the above-captioned application.

With this response, Applicant has selectively amended claims 1 and 23, as above. Applicant respectfully submits that the amended claims overcome the basis for rejection, placing such claims in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1 and 23, as amended, be withdrawn.

Applicant notes that claims 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10-15, 17, 23, 25, 27, 29 and 30, as amended, and new claim 32 each depend from patentable base claims 1 or 23, as amended. In this regard, Applicant respectfully submits that such claims are patentable over the cited documents by virtue of at least their dependence on patentable base claims 1 or 23, respectively. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10-15, 17, 23, 25, 27, 29 and 30 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION


In light of at least the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-23, 25-30, 32 and 33 are in condition for allowance and earnestly requests prompt notice thereof. *Applicant respectfully invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned representative for a telephone conference if it determined that such a conference could lead to allowance of one or more of the pending claims.*

Should it be determined that any additional fee is required, or overage returned, in association with this response, please debit or credit my deposit account number 50-0221 as appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,
David J. Gesbert, et al.

Dated: September 27, 2004

by:


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